

THE SCOOP ON REPORTING ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

AGENDA

Introductions.

You Rule! *(2 minutes)*

Words Rule! *(8 minutes)*

Headlines Rule! *(Interactive Exercise: 5 minutes)*

Images Rule! *(8 minutes)*

Ads Rule! *(4 minutes)*

Barbara Jordan Awards Rule! *(6 minutes)*

Do's Rule! *(Interactive Exercise: 5 minutes)*

Q & A's Rule! *(Questions and Answers: 5 minutes)*

Notes:

- ☆ The viewing time for this audio described, open captioned video is approximately 30 minutes.
- ☆ The estimated time for the interactive exercises is 10 minutes.
- ☆ The essential skills addressed by this training include clarity, engaging language, investigative research, use of direct and indirect quotes, function of headlines, use of illustrations and photographs, and design of advertisements.

Handouts:

- ☆ Agenda & About the Governor's Committee and the Barbara Jordan Awards.
- ☆ Words Rule! & Headlines Rule! Exercises.
- ☆ Do's Rule! & All Access Article.

This document is available in the following accessible formats:
Braille, large print, audio (cassette) tape, or computer disk.

About the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

The Governor's Committee mission furthers opportunities for persons with disabilities to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity and self-determination.

Committee work includes:

- ☆ making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on disability policies;
- ☆ promoting compliance with state and Federal disability laws;
- ☆ supporting local committees that do similar work; and
- ☆ recognizing employers and media professionals for contributions to Texans with disabilities.

Twelve volunteer Committee members are appointed by the Governor, seven of whom must have a disability.

We especially wish to thank Kym King, Judy Scott, and Kaye Beneke for the creative energy they dedicated to this training project.

Visit: <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/disabilities>

About the Barbara Jordan Media Awards

In 1982, the Committee began recognizing communicators for accurately and progressively portraying people with disabilities. At the suggestion of many in the media, the awards were named for the late Barbara Jordan, one of Texas' most distinguished citizens and foremost spokespersons for the rights of all people. The beautiful, three inch bronze medallion was designed by David Deming, an internationally prominent sculptor.

Each year the Committee honors a select group of communicators in the fields of print, radio, photojournalism, television, advertising, and other areas. There is a specific student category, but students may also enter in other categories.

Visit:

<http://www.governor.state.tx.us/disabilities/awards/index.htm>

For an entry form or more information contact:

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THE SCOOP ON REPORTING ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

WORDS RULE!

Who are people with disabilities?

Students – Neighbors – Friends – Family – Co-workers

Randy, Judy, Shane, Nancy, Kym, Pat, Cindy, and Doug

When you met Doug in the video were you surprised to find out that he is a Structural Engineer?

What words DO NOT emphasize value?

Those – They – Them

The Disabled – The Handicapped

Disabled – Handicapped

Crippled – Victim – Sufferer

Afflicted – Stricken

Deaf – Dumb – Mute

Retarded

Crazy – Insane

Bound – Confined

What words DO emphasize value?

Person with a disability.

A person's name: Randy, Judy, Shane, Nancy, Kym, Pat, Cindy and Doug

HEADLINES RULE!

Access, Communications, Education, Health, Housing, Transportation, Recreation, and Workforce issues affect more than 4 million Texans with disabilities.

Access:

1. Access for fans with disabilities goes above and beyond at new Dallas arena
2. Handicap access pier dedicated

Communications:

1. Assisting people with disabilities in a disaster
2. Device lets the disabled cast votes in private

Education:

1. Seven in ten teachers have students with disabilities
2. Overcoming ADHD

Health:

1. Study of veterans with head injuries linked to later depression
2. Anorexic sues to live on Campus

Housing:

1. New book describes designers with disabilities
2. Wheelchair-bound woman will be 1st to get house with added features

Transportation:

1. Stop: This space is reserved for a person with a disability
2. Handicap parking patrol assists police department

Recreation:

1. Children with disabilities play ball
2. Ponies help the retarded heal

Workforce:

1. Youth with disabilities celebrate mentoring day
2. Saved from Silence

HEADLINES RULE!

EXERCISE

The first headline in each subject area is positive. Words emphasize the person first and not the disability.

Question: What do these phrases communicate . . .
fans with disabilities, people with disabilities,
students with disabilities, veterans with head injuries,
designers with disabilities, person with a disability,
children with disabilities, youth with disabilities?

Answer: Active, Independent, Dignity, Respect, and People First

Now look at second headline in each subject area. Negative words are **bolded and underlined**.

Question: What do these words communicate?

Answer: Helplessness, Dependence, Pity, Illness, or Disability First

Discuss these headline rewrites:

Access: Pier offers access to people with disabilities

Communication: Device provides privacy for voters with disabilities

Education: New techniques assist people with ADHD

Health: Person with anorexia sues to live on campus

Housing: Woman first to receive accessible home features

Transportation: Citizen patrol assists police in enforcing accessible parking

Recreation: Ponies used as a therapeutic tool for children with disabilities

Workforce: Learning to talk with signs

THE SCOOP ON REPORTING ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

DO's RULE!

Interviewing Tips

- ☆ Do focus on the story.
- ☆ Do prepare for the interview.
- ☆ Do locate an accessible interview place.
- ☆ Do promote dignity, respect and understanding.
- ☆ Do ask questions; don't assume.
- ☆ Do respect privacy and individual preferences.

Do interview people with disabilities.

Do not neglect people with disabilities.

Do treat adults as adults.

Do not patronize.

Do remember that people with disabilities are ordinary people.

Do not portray people with disabilities as extraordinary.

Do offer assistance.

Do not provide assistance unless your offer is accepted.

Do use actors and actresses with disabilities.

Do not use people without disabilities to represent a person with a disability.

Do ask the person to repeat information that you do not understand.

Do not pretend to understand.

Do place yourself at eye level if interviewing a person using a wheelchair.

Do not lean on the individual's wheelchair.

Do let people with visual disabilities know where the camera is.

Do not begin an interview without identifying the camera's location.

Do interact with individuals using service animals.

Do not pet or interact with the working service animal.

Do speak directly to the person who has a disability.

Do not shout & do not speak through the interpreter or attendant.

ALL ACCESS

Written by Adam Hasler (Barbara Jordan Award Winner)

In May, Miriam Gary will finish her first year at Westlake High School. She spends her time doing choir and art, as well as a normal course load. Westlake isn't anything like she imagined, as she had entered with visions of seniors taping freshmen to walls and the thousand other stories that freshmen hear from someone with a big brother in high school.

"I was all nervous," Miriam said. "But it's not like that."

As she plans her schedule for next year, she has worked closely with the administration to make sure that her classes are close together and accessible for Miriam and her wheelchair. At the end of freshman year, Miriam has successfully traversed the campus, despite Westlake's lack of accessibility. She smiles though, and has a cheery attitude, even as she talks about a long distance she has to travel or a door that's especially difficult to open, all of which require a pretty good amount of shoulder strength.

"It takes a while to build the muscles up," Miriam said. "But once you've done it for 15 years, it's not so hard."

Any difficulties that Miriam may have in mobility don't seem so bad with the help she receives from other students. Help from someone else doesn't threaten her independence. Miriam knows she doesn't need anyone's help.

"I can do it, I'm totally independent," Miriam said. "They always ask if they can help. Sometimes I accept, sometimes I feel like doing it on my own."

When asked what she would change about the facilities at Westlake, she speaks of the administrations' plans to implement electric doors and more ramps. Accessibility at Westlake doesn't bother Miriam much, but the topic bothers principal Chris Hines a great deal.

"We've done a lot in the past four years," Hines said. "But we're a long way from being up to speed."

The bulk of Westlake's campus was built prior to the early 1970's, before the United States government passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, which gave a list of specifications for new facilities that would allow easier access for disabled people. According to Daniel Perez, head of maintenance and construction for Eanes, structures built before A.D.A. do not have the meet A.D.A. standards. Until any renova-

tions or remodeling, the structures can remain as they stand. Both Hines and Perez hope that with the new bond package and the construction costs that it will provide, Westlake may come closer to full accessibility for all its students.

“My first year here, I participated on a facility planning committee,” Hines said. “It was our job to walk the campus and envision ourselves in wheelchairs. We’ve implemented some things and tried to respond to some of the complaints and tried to respond to some of the complaints we’ve received. The district has made a good effort.”

Many of the structural fixes won’t require a great amount of change, such as making doors wider, lighter or automatic, more handicapped parking and ramps and improving the restrooms by adding larger stalls with rails. Changes like a central elevator, a handicapped accessible press box in the stadium and making the band and dance offices handicapped accessible takes a much larger scope. According to Perez, structural changes that will include accessibility improvements at Westlake will total up to \$1,153,000. Although not all of this will go to accessibility-specific improvements, it will pay for the renovations that will include improved access.

“Now that the bond has passed, I expect to see a lot of the work done,” Hines said. “I realize that the school was built prior to the code. It wasn’t something you had to do. Now, it’s imperative and my number one priority.”

When contractors and architects finish plans for renovations or a building, they must submit it to the Texas Office of Licensing and Regulations where engineers in the office inspect it and make sure it meets the state and federal standards for handicapped accessibility, in addition to other structural regulations. Although construction can begin immediately, a representative from the state comes to inspect it up to two years after contractors submit the plans. Meeting the fairly strict regulations poses a challenge for builders and contractors, and even small renovations can cost huge amounts of money.

“Of course money is always an issue when you’re required to make things totally accessible when they’re renovated,” Perez said. “The last time most renovations were made was before handicapped accessibility standards applied.”

The final product will hopefully allow access to everyone who comes to Westlake. With the construction of a totally accessible Ninth Grade Center, the rest of Westlake’s facilities will be hard pressed to meet the precedent that the newer Center will set. The administration both at Westlake and in Eanes has made arrangements to meet the high standards set within the rest of the district. When the construction ends, Westlake will become a more accessible, and thereby a more enjoyable and pleasant, environment to those in a wheelchair.